



10 STEPS

**Ten Steps to
Maintain Critical
Wastewater Services
and
Protect Public Health
in an Emergency**



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Have you taken these Ten Steps to Maintain Critical Wastewater Services and Protect Public Health in an Emergency?

STEP 1

Make an emergency contact list that includes all essential contacts.

- Post by each telephone and distribute to all staff
- Review and update the list quarterly, and as changes occur
- Include contacts needed to inform your community of emergencies

STEP 2

Inspect your facilities daily.

- Inspect treatment facilities (*e.g., lift/pump stations, outfalls, chemical storage areas, fences, etc.*)
- Use a security checklist to log results
- Take immediate action to address vulnerabilities

STEP 3

Make security and preparedness everyone's job.

- Leaders must set a good example toward security
- Make all staff accountable for their security actions
- Report problems immediately
- Implement a plan to communicate regularly with employees, emergency responders, and customers about security issues
- Have plans to increase security when risks are elevated

STEP 4

Limit and control access to facilities.

- Routinely lock all doors and gates
- Remove keys and lock vehicles
- Limit key access to essential personnel
- Keep track of who has keys

STEP 5

Establish relationships with emergency personnel and neighboring facilities.

- Involve emergency personnel in your emergency planning (*e.g., fire, police, hospitals, etc.*)
- Establish mutual aid agreements with neighboring facilities, as appropriate
- Familiarize emergency personnel with all aspects and vulnerabilities of your system

STEP 6

Practice safe chemical handling and usage.

- Control chemical deliveries and be aware of delivery dates
- Store chemicals safely and securely
- Dispose of chemicals properly

STEP 7

Secure your records and maps.

- Update and organize critical information
- Control access to records and maps
- Backup computer files regularly
- Install updated virus protection and firewall on computers
- Secure deeds, titles, reports, etc. with copies or protection from fire and water damage

STEP 8

Assess threats and identify vulnerabilities.

- Prioritize key threats and vulnerabilities
- Harden facilities that are vulnerable to security threats and natural disasters
- Take appropriate steps to prevent, detect, delay, and deter intruders
- Consider security and emergency preparedness when making system changes
- Review security priorities annually

STEP 9

Have an emergency response plan for your wastewater system.

- Know key steps to take in an emergency
- Identify sources of backup equipment and assistance
- Train staff on the plan, and test it with emergency personnel and neighboring facilities
- Practice, practice, practice
- Update the plan annually

STEP 10

Educate staff, elected officials, and community members about how they can protect their wastewater system.

- Do not place hazardous material or objects in collection systems
- Report suspicious behavior and vandalism immediately
- Recognize and report abnormal situations
- Use neighborhood watch programs to help protect collection systems and other wastewater assets

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages all wastewater systems to conduct a vulnerability assessment and take appropriate steps to improve security and emergency preparedness. Carrying out these ten steps is a good start.

More information about improving security and emergency preparedness is available on EPA's website, www.epa.gov/safewater/, or by calling the National Environmental Services Center at 1-800-624-8301.

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